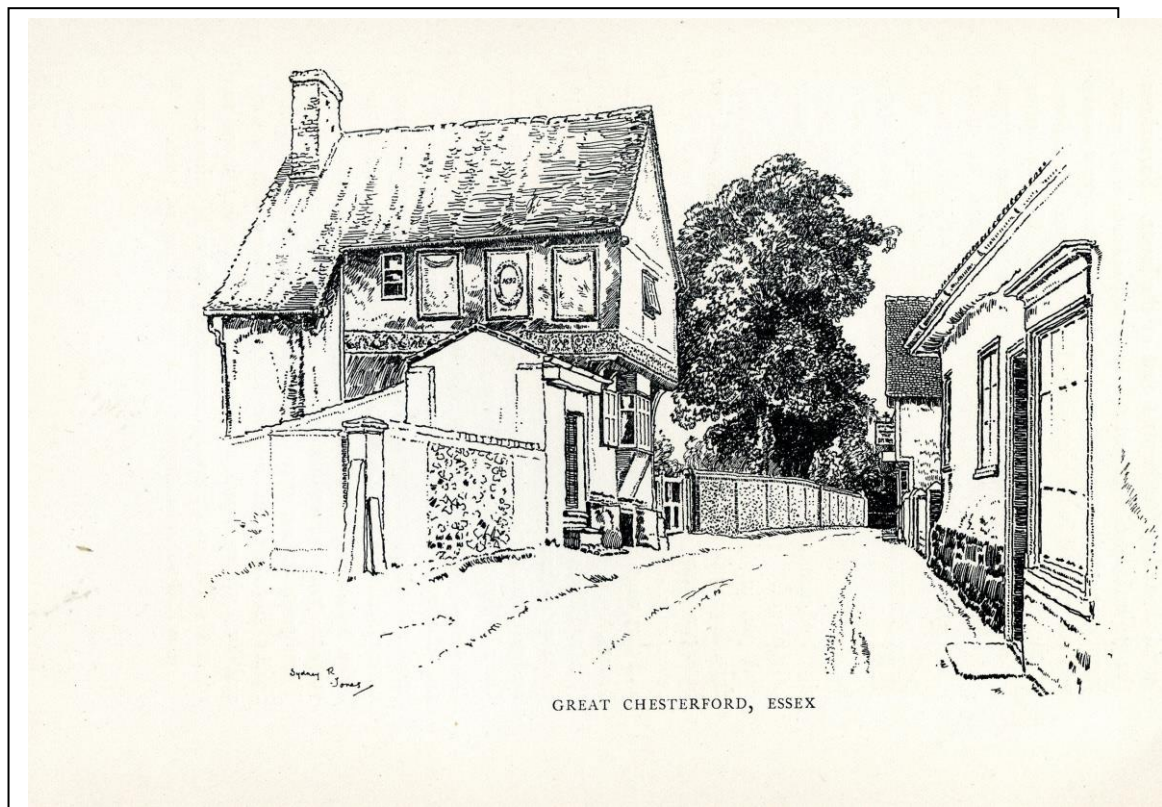


# Chesterfords Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies relating to  
Great and Little Chesterford  
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the  
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the  
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online  
at [bit.ly/CambsCollection](http://bit.ly/CambsCollection)

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.  
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get  
in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central  
Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled  
since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – [www.mikepetty.org.uk](http://www.mikepetty.org.uk) for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1900 01 13

Gt Chesterford fire, p3

1900 04 26

The licensing committee were told that the Eagle Tavern in Great Chesterford should be closed. The trade was meagre, only doing half a barrel a week, the house was in an outlying part of the parish and in a dilapidated condition. That would leave the village with two fully-licensed and six beerhouses, with a population of about 700, which included those who did not drink at all. The bench agreed to the surrender of the licences of the Eagle, the Fox & Hounds and the Wagon and Horses, but refused the surrender of the White Horse.

1902 11 24

A fire broke out in a stack of oats and a stack of thousand-head at Parish's farm in Littlebury and the outlook became serious. There was a lack of water which was not accessible nearer than the river Granta and an unusual length of hose was required by the fire brigades. Then on Friday night a fire broke out at the rear of the Falcon Inn, Littlebury. A tank was placed in the middle of the village into which the Walden Brigade pumped water from the river while the Great Chesterford men pumped it on to the burning premises. Great consternation prevailed among the inhabitants who, from many cottages, removed all their goods into the street. The back portion of the Falcon Inn was damaged and the buildings in the yard destroyed.

1903 10 13

There was another heavy downpour of rain; the Cam has but in a few places overflowed its banks and the ferries between Cambridge and Chesterton are still working. The Granta has not behaved so well and the water is already over the banks; there is a vast expanse of water with the tops of the hedges and the trees only showing. At Grantchester mill the road is knee deep. The basement of houses in Newmarket High Street are flooded as are some of the low-lying streets at Saffron Walden and the railway line at Chesterford is threatened with being submerged.

1904 12 13

The Macedonian gypsies were moved from Newmarket to Six Mile Bottom, the number of followers increasing as the journey continued; by the time they got to Pampisford station they numbered at least 300. Essex police were waiting at Stump Cross but Cambs police decided to take them further into that county. They camped at Chesterford before passing on to Stansted where they were transferred to Hertfordshire police who will take them on to London.

1906 07 04

Sir – many of the wells in Great Chesterford have been closed by the Medical Officer of Health by pasting a printed notice that the well was contaminated and all water should be boiled. These notices were washed off by rain within a few days. The wells should be properly filled up. Now the parish council proposes to construct two bored wells, but this will result in people having to walk a quarter of a mile to draw water. They also vetoed a sewage scheme on cost grounds. This is ridiculous. – G.W. Law 06 07 04

1908 04 01

Gt Chesterford stack fire – 08 04 01c

1908 05 14

Chesterford gardener bankruptcy – 08 05 14c

1911 03 31

Lt Abington annual parish meeting was distinctly breezy. Last year the meeting was held in the school when the lighting arrangements were inadequate: there were no lamps and the parishioners had to see as best they could with the aid of two or three diminutive candles. This year it was the Mission Hall but the Vicar objected and the chairman threatened to call in the policeman to eject him. Reference was made to the excessive speed of motor cars through the village. The disused railway line from Gt Chesterford to Six Mile Bottom should be made into a motor track. 11 03 31g

1914 04 10

The fire at Lt Chesterford practically repast the disaster that occurred at Swavesey last year. In these days of slated and tiled roofs, fires of this magnitude are comparatively rare but in the 'good of days' it was not uncommon for a dozen cottages to be destroyed in a single outbreak. Villages like Chesterford have been largely left alone by the modern builder and are still open to the danger of annihilation. Only on Monday a public house and two cottages were burned down at Newport. Soon perhaps the thatched cottages will have disappeared altogether save for isolated specimens regarded as curiosities. 14 04 10c

1914 04 17

A most disastrous fire broke out at Little Chesterford: eleven houses have been gutted and ten families, numbering 43 persons, are rendered homeless. It started at a stack at Bordeaux Farm then wind carried large pieces of burning straw on to the roofs of three thatched cottages which were razed to the ground. Other balls of fire fell on roofs of houses up the street and those which were thatched fell easy prey to the flames. The Crown Inn and Bushel and Strike beerhouse were gutted. When the smoke cleared the village presented a strange spectacle for nothing remained but the chimney stacks 14 04 10h

Lt Chesterford fire – photo – 14 04 17h

1914 11 13

Dale Brewery medals – wins silver medals for best stout & best bottled ale at Brewers' Exhibition; has acquired a maltings and brewery stores at Gt Chesterford & improved machinery

1914 12 04

A deserter from the Liverpool Regiment has been arrested on a charge of bogus billeting at various villages. Dressed in khaki, he called at Gt Chesterford and said he was seeking billets for 3,000 troops. He found lodgings with a poor woman who took him in out of sympathy. He had bed supper and breakfast and then left, saying his superiors would pay his account. Nothing has since been heard of him. He then visited Newmarket where he saw the Vicar and made arrangement for the Church House rooms for the use of the troops. The rooms were cleared and made ready for the arrival of the soldiers, but none have arrived.

1918 02 23

Record Floods,—As a result of the heavy fall of snow on the evening of January 15-16, Cambridge was visited during the weekend by such high floods as have not been known for many years. With the melting of the snow the Rivers Cam and Granta assumed a very muddy and turbulent appearance, and the water gradually increased in volume until in places it overflowed its banks and inundated many of the low-lying lands in the district. Since Sunday morning, however, when the floods were at their height, the waters have subsided with remarkable rapidity.—Great havoc and distress was caused by flooding to houses situate in Mill Lane, Sawston, the houses being under water some four or five deep from Saturday midday until Monday morning. The deepest flood for 15 or 20 years was experienced at Ickleton on Saturday. The river began to overflow on Friday afternoon, so that several meadows were under water, but by early Saturday morning the meadows between Ickleton and Chesterford were inundated. The people in Mill Street had a very unpleasant experience, as the street was flooded from one end to the other to the depth of several feet. Most of the

people had to keep in their houses, and in some cases the basements of the houses had about six or more inches of water . . . If the river had been banked up along the meadow at the bottom of the street much inconvenience would have been saved

1923 09 24

A very serious fire, which at one time looked like sweeping away an entire village, broke out at Ickleton on Saturday night. Due to some boys playing with fireworks a stack on Mr Griggs' farm burst into flames and it was not many minutes before the entire stackyard was on fire and it was soon obvious that the only building that could be saved was the farm house itself. By the time the fire engines arrived the sky was lit up for miles around and pieces of burning material were flying over the village. Thatched roofs were continually catching fire and householders were kept busy all night putting out burning parts of their property. The fire soon spread to the Priory Farm. It was not long before the three ponds which had supplied the tenders with water were dry, and the nearest source of supply was the river. It was the biggest fire since the blaze at Chesterford in 1914 and a really big calamity was only averted by 15 hours strenuous work on behalf of all concerned

1927 02 08

The Great Chesterford Rat and Sparrow Club dinner was told that 2,845 sparrows had been killed, against 7,135 in 1925 and 6,527 rats against 8,600. The society was doing good work in keeping down the vile rat. The sparrow was also a pest but it did good when in search of caterpillars. They hoped the other side of Saffron Walden would form a club as it was hardly fair that one district should take steps to keep down the number of rats and sparrows and others do nothing at all.

1927 06 27

Cambridge station had a very busy weekend. Over 4,000 travelled on Saturday to visit the Midsummer Fair. Extra carriages were attached to all incoming and outgoing trains and late special trains were run to Haverhill, Newmarket, St Ives and Great Chesterford.

1927 12 06

Alfred Seaman, of Lt Chesterford told magistrates he was driving a steam tractor and saw a lorry proceeding towards Saffron Walden. The lorry was travelling about 25 mph and he gave it plenty of room to pass. He looked back and saw it crash into the Eight Bells public house. William Wright said he did not understand much about speed but the lorry was travelling at a terrific rate, which caused it to skid. PC Little said there were marks which showed it skidded 27 yards before it mounted the pavement and crashed into the doorway of the public house.  
Dec 11

1928 03 01

The object of the Great Chesterford Sparrow and Rat Club is that all members shall kill one fully-fledged sparrow for each acre, with one rat for every two acres of his occupation during the year, and that 29 sparrows or 10 rats be the minimum contribution. Any member not killing the requisite numbers will be fined a half-penny an acre; the money going towards the cost of the annual dinner. During the year 5,989 rats and 3,126 sparrows had been killed.

1929 02 27

Cambridge Photographic Club's exhibition contains a number of local views. Mr Bellamy has eight nice photographs, the best of which is 'Farm near Barton'. Mr Watson's 'Suffolk Road' is a fine rich picture, as is also his 'Pampisford'. In the novice's section Miss Dorothy Bellamy has a well-arranged print 'Street in Chesterford' and Mr Boutflower shows a charming 'Over Ferry'

1934 11 26

Fire broke out at the White House, Great Chesterford where the chauffeur, named Plumb, was in the garage attending to a Sunbeam car. When the engine was started it back-fired and the vehicle was enveloped in flames which spread to the corrugated-iron garage which was destroyed. Firemen obtained water from a large pond near the house. There were goldfish in the pond but the obstructing appliance on the hose prevented them from being sucked through the pipe. 34 11 26

1938 06 10

Firemen were called to the main road between Littlebury and Little Chesterford where they found a fairground wagon ablaze. The Foden wagon, owned by Mr J.H. Manning of Bedford, contained a Jollity Farm and was on its way to Coton. They did their best to save some of the parts but the whole of the wagon and practically all its contents were completely destroyed. Damage was estimated at between £1,000 and £2,000 38 06 10

1938 08 16

Saffron Walden council heard that billeting of evacuees would become compulsory and a tribunal should be appointed to hear appeals from people not wanting to have them. They would have to accept them and their appeal would be heard as soon as possible. A second-hand fire tender had been bought for the Great Chesterford brigade and smoke helmets should be bought for Stansted, Newport and Chesterford brigades with hose parties established in Berden, Elmdon and Hempstead. 39 08 16

1938 12 30

A Chesterford Jubilee. — A presentation of a scroll and cheque to Mr. A. L. Denny was made at Great Chesterford Post Office on Thursday of last week. It was in appreciation of his work in the village and there were 193 subscribers. The presentation was made by Lt. Col. A. S. W. Stanley, who spoke appreciatively of Mr. Denny's work in the village both as postmaster and also as vergar at the parish church. He had done very much for the village and they were all very grateful. Col. Stanley added that it was the 50th Christmas Mr. Denny had spent in the local post office.

1939 02 10

Death of Professor.—Professor John Hay Lobban, who retired from the Professorship of Literature at London University three years ago, died suddenly at his home, South Cottage, Gt. Chesterford, on Wednesday. His wife is sister to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Professor of English Literature at Cambridge University. Professor Lobban had been about the village as usual during the day. He was seized with heart failure while chatting after dinner.

1941 09 19

Childerley of Other Days. — A correspondent's remarks about the Cambs village of Childerley (writes Watchman) have brought me the following very interesting comment by a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, who signs himself "G.H.K." In the 1833 edition of Gorton's Topographical Dictionary, Childerley is given a population of 50. It is stated that 'the church is actually demolished.' Actually, Childerley once possessed two churches, both of which, it is stated, were demolished and the village depopulated, by Sir John Cutts, Bart., at the beginning of the 16th century, for the purpose of forming a deer park. How this high-handed procedure was permitted, as regards the churches, we are not told. Richard Cutts, a squire of Arkesden, inherited the Childerley property about 1670 and was father to General Lord Cutts, author, soldier, and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, who took part in most of the battles of his day with conspicuous gallantry. His second wife was the daughter of a Cambridgeshire baronet, Sir Henry Pickering, of Whaddon. Childerley Hall stands on the site of the old Cutts' mansion. If the Pickering home exists, it must now be a farmhouse, several of which in Whaddon have attractive architectural features. Referring to another note, this time about Nell Gwyn, my correspondent says: "Nell Gwyn is traditionally associated with old

houses at Clavering and Newport and with the Crown House, formerly an inn, on the Newmarket Road at Great Chesterford."

1956 10 05

Fisons new pest control research station at Chesterford Park was opened where in the rambling old house which has been converted into laboratories with an entire new wing built at the rear. The old wine cellars have been transformed into hot, warm and cold rooms for studying different forms of plant and animal life. 56 10 05e

1957 06 18

Main line trains were diverted through Saffron Walden while the iron bridge near Great Chesterford was replaced. For weeks the road under the bridge has been closed while the steel girders were built into the form of a pre-fabricated bridge. Then by an ingenious piece of engineering the entire section, weighing many tons, was trundled forward on two specially-laid sets of rails. 57 06 18a

1957 09 05

Chesterford Park Estate comprising 2,366 acres including Hall Farm, Little Walden, together with eight other farms, small holdings and cottages producing rentals of over £4,000 was offered for sale. But only one lot reached its reserve price. It will now be offered privately. 57 09 05a

1959 09 25

One of the most up-to-date slaughterhouses will shortly be in operation at Great Chesterford following an appeal by Messrs Duke and Nichols, butchers, to construct additions to their existing slaughterhouse in Chapel Street. It had been there for many years and although it was not well located the additions would not adversely affect the character of the area, the Minister decided 59 02 25

1961 03 03

In 1943 an anti-aircraft shell dump near Rectory Farm, Little Chesterford, exploded and the owner of the farm, Ted Fordham, has been finding shells on his land ever since. "I must have found about 100 shells and usually am able to deal with them myself", he told the News. But yesterday while clearing some undergrowth he found a 3.7 shell which seemed to be live as it was complete with fuse and detonator. This time he decided to call the police to take the bomb away 61 03 03a

1961 06 30

With taxation problems and death duties many stately homes are being turned into business premises. Abington Hall was a private residence for a Mr Bertrand who surrendered it to the Army during the War, it is now the British Welding Research Association. Lord Inchcape left Chesterford Park in 1918; it became a Jewish Home for Incurable and is now Fison's Pest Control research centre. The mansion at Shudy Camps houses thousands of chickens having been acquired by Lyddite Chicks in 1949 - 61 05 30d also Madingley Hall, Milton Hall, Wimpole Hall, Babraham Hall belongs to the Agricultural Research Council c.61 06 30d

1961 11 20

Main train lines were diverted while railway engineers worked throughout the night to construct a bridge on the line between Great Chesterford and Shelford. They started at 11.30 pm under electric lighting take up the old bridge and fit one of a standard design four feet above the water level of the narrow river at Duxford. Men worked in shifts throughout the day while trains were diverted via Audley End, Bartlow and Shelford. 61 11 20

1962 03 13

An express freight train broke in two as it was passing through Audley End station. The two halves travelled about four miles downhill towards Cambridge and collided on the Ickleton road crossing and bridge outside Gt Chesterford station. A tanker wagon carrying 4,000 gallons of diesel oil was severely damaged causing the oil to spray out over the adjoining fields and seep into a stream. 62 03 13 & a & b

1964 04 24

Gt Chesterford 'Life in a village' photos – 64 04 24d

1973 10 14

There are still a lot of young people around who remember the Fifties, those golden days when Bill Haley was top of the charts and the permissive society had not been heard of. More than 40 of them got together in Gt Chesterford's village hall to celebrate the 26th birthday of an Ickleton teddy boy. Most of them wore the "teds" uniform of drainpipe trousers, long jackets, bootlace ties, slicked-back Tony Curtis hairdos. They jived until midnight to the music of the Bluebird's Rock 'n' Roll Band. One said, "The only time he doesn't wear his teddy boy clothes is at work, but even there he wears old creepers and one ear-ring" He added "Whatever anybody says I don't think there has ever been anything smarter than 'drains'

1976 02 14

The mystery of a walled-up tunnel in an old coaching inn at Great Chesterford is to be explored by its new owners. It is believed the four-foot wide by six-foot high arched brick tunnel leads from the cellars of the Crown House Restaurant to the village church. But the passage is blocked by a four-foot thick brick wall from floor to roof – built perhaps by Cromwell's men. Charles II is said to have stayed in the Crown House in the days when it was a main coaching inn.

1978 10 20

The level-crossing keeper at Great Chesterford described his day: "You learn the sleep through the trains, even though they rush right next door to the house and almost shake you out of bed. The gates are open to trains until 7 am, after that they're open to traffic. You don't often get woken up in the night – about once every two months a driver wants to get through; according to regulations you're allowed 20 minutes dressing time, but I don't bother. You have to put up with all sorts of things. People flushing the train loo over the crossing or impatient lorry drivers who use your garden as a lavatory if they're kept waiting. The other day the bell broke down and so I didn't open the gates. Next thing there was this darn great express sitting there, hooting at me"

1978 11 24

Leonard Crickmore of Saffron Walden recalls crawling among landmines with trees being splintered by shells all around after his fire engine had been blown up. This incredible episode happened in May 1944 amid quiet rolling pastures at Chesterford Park. It then housed a major ammunition dump and the mansion was occupied as a Jewish Hospital. Violent explosions smashed windows in shops at Saffron Walden, two miles away and High Street stores had wooden boards across their windows for more than a year as plate glass was scarce. These events have been recalled by the return of the army for an eight-week stint clearing the debris of the explosions

1979 01 03

Cambridge University's most historic coffin covering in cloth of gold is to be moved back to Great St Mary's church. The sombre pall was paraded over an empty coffin nearly 500 years ago while dons offered prayers for the repose of the soul of King Henry VII. Following his death the hearse cloth continued to be used in requiems on the anniversary of his burial. It has been housed for many years in the Fitzwilliam Museum but will now be displayed under the same roof which Henry gave in 1505 when he ordered 100 oak trees to be felled at Chesterford to provide the wood.

1979 04 30

The 1,800 villagers of Duxford have lost their tiny branch surgery, despite a petition calling for its retention. Now they have to go to Sawston. Doctors say that the old days when the doctor was a comforter and father figure handing out bottles of red medicine have passed and the higher standards of modern medicine depend on tests and examinations which cannot be carried out at a branch surgery. Other surgeries have closed recently in Barton and Barrington while a question mark hangs over those at Great Chesterford and Elmdon. At Soham Health Centre there are minibuses to bring patients in from neighbouring villages and this might be arranged for Duxford.

1980 02 15

Ciba-Geigy is planning a new railway link to their site at Duxford which would mean 13,000 fewer lorries passing through local villages. At present the plastics factory is served by two sidings, one in Great Chesterford and the other at Whittlesford. Loading and unloading is carried out by a fleet of lorries including a tanker for highly inflammable methanol. Their journeys lead through narrow winding streets. But if they obtain a rail freight facilities grant it would provide a spur line into the site; however they need permission for a railway crossing on the Hinxton road. Nearly everybody likes the idea. 80 02 15

1980 11 20

The Duxford Flyer is equally at home on road or rail. With the rail wheels down she can shunt up to 700 tons of railway wagons at the CIBA-Geigy plastics factory. Using her road wheels she can potter round at a stately six miles an hour. The four-tone Unilokomotive is part of a scheme to end their dependence on two sidings at Great Chesterford and Whittlesford. The new railway leads directly into the works from the main Cambridge-London railway line and relieves Duxford and Ickleton of lorry traffic. 80 11 20

1981 06 08

Firemen saved a 300-year-old cottage at Great Chesterford from serious damage when sparks from a blazing barn set the thatch on fire. The barn, at the back of the Post Office, which had been converted into three garages was gutted, and a parked car parked was also destroyed. The premises of Swaine, Adney Briggs and Sons who make umbrellas for the Queen Mother and gloves for the Queen were undamaged, though a section of guttering melted in the heat 81 06 08

1985 01 23

Hundreds of farmers and traders flocked to Milton Road sale ground for the biggest traction auction in the country. Yilmaz Alademir had come all the way from Farmagusta, Cyprus looking for a tractor he could ship home as they were much cheaper in England. A more typical buyer was Gavin Hamilton of Manor Farm, Great Chesterford. He was looking for wheels and rollers among the dozens of machines and implements at the back of the saleground. The sale was started in the early 1940s by Mr Henry Grain & Cambridge auctioneers Cheffins, Grain and Chalk have been pulling the crowds ever since 85 01 23b # c.27.3

1985 04 11

Choppen's links with Saffron Walden go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the family moved their engineering business to the town from Great Chesterford. John Choppen, the founder, was also a local fireman and drove the horse-drawn fire engine. His son Frank, under whose control the business prospered, died in 1962. They established a branch in Fitzroy Street Cambridge in 1964 with a purpose-built garden machinery centre in Barnwell road opening in 1980. Now expansion continues with a new headquarters with offices, workshops and showrooms in Thaxted Road, Walden. 85 04 11

1986 11 01

A traveller dismantled parts of a motorway bridge at Gt Chesterford and pedalled away with the bits strapped to his bicycle. 86 11 01

1987 04 01

Princess Anne has become the first member of the Royal Family to visit the Great Chesterford factory of Swaine Adeney Brigg and Sons. The firm has made umbrellas, gloves, walking sticks and other leather goods for most of her relatives and ancestors since the reign of George III. The Princess and her husband, Captain Mark Phillips chatted to Joan Cowley who supervises 16 women producing 900 umbrellas a week. She also saw a despatch box belonging to Prince Charles that was being refurbished as it had got a bit tatty. 87 04 01

1988 10 18

Great Chesterford new premises for traditional bakers – 88 10 18b & c